Claims:

1. A method of preparing a return intermediate, including a flange portion on at least one edge of the return, for subsequent shaping, bending and incorporation into the return for a channel letter comprising:

cutting the outline of the return in the appropriate length and width from larger sheet stock, said outline including the removal of material from the flange portion of the return indicating where the return is to be shaped and bent, said material being removed in amounts facilitating the shaping and bending depending on the direction and amount of the shape or bend;

scoring the width of the return to indicate the location and direction where the return is to be bent in an inward direction and removing material from the return to facilitate the subsequent bending of the return in that direction; and

scoring the width of the return to indicate the location and direction where the return is to be bent in an outward direction and removing material from the return to facilitate the subsequent bending of the return in that direction.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the scoring of the return for bends in the inward direction is different from the scoring of the return for bends in the outward direction.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the scoring of the return for bends in the inward direction is deeper than the scoring of the return for bends in the outward direction.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein all of the cutting and scoring are all performed by a router.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein at least one of the scoring steps is performed before cutting the outline.

6. The method of Claim 1 wherein the cutting and scoring result in the removal of sufficient material from the return so that it can be subsequently shaped and bent without a hand brake.

7. The method of Claim 1 which further includes the marking the return with the shape of the finished return.

8.   A method for preparing a back panel and a return intermediate, including a flange portion on at least one edge of the return, for subsequent shaping, bending and incorporation into a channel letter comprising:

5   cutting the outline of the back panel and the return from a single piece of larger sheet stock said outline including the removal of material from the flange portion of the return indicating where the return is to be shaped and bent, said material being removed in amounts facilitating the shaping and bending depending on the direction and amount of the shape or bend;

10   scoring the width of the return to indicate the location and direction where the return is to be bent in an inward direction and removing material from the return to facilitate the subsequent bending of the return in that direction; and

            scoring the width of the return to indicate the location and direction where the return is to be bent in an outward direction and removing material from the return to facilitate

15   the subsequent bending of the return in that direction.

9.   The method of Claim 8 wherein the scoring of the return for bends in the inward direction is different from the scoring of the return for bends in the outward direction.

20   10.   The method of Claim 9 wherein the scoring of the return for bends in the inward direction is deeper than the scoring of the return for bends in the outward direction.

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11. The method of Claim 8 wherein all of the cutting and scoring are all performed by a router.

12. The method of Claim 8 wherein at least one of the scoring steps is performed before cutting the outline.

13. The method of Claim 8 wherein the cutting and scoring result in the removal of sufficient material from the return so that it can be subsequently shaped and bent without a hand brake.

14. The method of Claim 8 which further includes the marking the return with the shape of the finished return.

15.   A return intermediate, including a flange portion on at least one edge of the

return, for subsequent shaping, bending and incorporation into a channel letter comprising:

a return outline in the appropriate length and width said outline in the flange

5   portion including areas where material has been removed indicating where the return is to be

shaped and bent and in amount facilitating the shaping and bending depending on the

direction and amount of the shape or bend;

scoring across the width of the return to indicate the location and direction

where the return is to be bent in an inward direction, said scoring being in an amount to

10   facilitate the subsequent bending of the return in that direction; and

scoring across the width of the return to indicate the location and direction

where the return is to be bent in an outward direction, said scoring being in an amount to and

facilitate the subsequent bending of the return in that direction.

15   16.   The return intermediate of Claim 15 which further includes marking depicting

the shape of the finished return.

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17.   A computer program storage medium readable by a computing system and encoding a computer program for executing a computer process for directing a machine to prepare a return, including a flange portion on at least one edge of the return, for subsequent shaping, bending and incorporation into a channel letter comprising:

5   cutting the outline of the return in the appropriate length and width from larger sheet stock, said outline including the removal of material from the flange portion of the return indicating where the return is to be shaped and bent, said material being removed in amounts facilitating the shaping and bending depending on the direction and amount of the shape or bend;

10   scoring the width of the return to indicate the location and direction where the return is to be bent in an inward direction and removing material from the return to facilitate the subsequent bending of the return in that direction; and

scoring the width of the return to indicate the location and direction where the return is to be bent in an outward direction and removing material from the return to facilitate

15   the subsequent bending of the return in that direction.